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EXDIS

1. DOCTOR PHAN QUANG DAN, CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY MEMBER AND VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ON LIST OF PHAN KHAC SUU, TOLD EMBOFF APRIL 27 THAT HE WAS VERY DISCOURAGED WITH PROGRESS OF ELECTORAL LAW. COMMITTEE DRAFT WHICH WILL BE DEBATED BEGINNING APRIL 28 DOES NOT HAVE PROVISION FOR RUN-OFF IN EVENT NO CANDIDATE RECEIVES SUBSTANTIAL PLURALITY OF VOTE. CLAUSE STIPULATING THAT CIVIL SERVANTS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL MUST GO ON LONG TERM LEAVE TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO ELECTION DOES NOT AFFECT DIRECTORATE MEMBERS OR PRIME MINISTER AND SUM OF MONEY ALLOCATED TO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IS INADEQUATE. (ARTICLE 21 OF DRAFT LAW PROVIDES THAT THE NATIONAL BUDGET WILL RESERVE 1 PIASTER PER REGISTERED VOTER FOR CAMPAIGN EXPENSES OF EACH CANDIDATE UNLESS CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE, COMPOSED OF CANDIDATES REPRESENTATIVES, UNANIMOUSLY DECIDES THAT THIS SUM INSUFFICIENT. CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTORAL LAW ALLOTTED 2. PIASTERS PER REGISTERED VOTER IN SINGLE MEMBER CONSTITUENCIES AND 3 PIASTERS IN CONSTITUENCIES WITH LIST VOTING. THE SUM STIPULATED IN THE DRAFT PRESIDENTIAL LAW WOULD REPRESENT A CAMPAIGN BUDGET OF APPROXIMATELY 5 MILLION PIASTERS PER CANDIDATE WHICH IS ONE-FOURTH TO ONE-TENTH THE SIZE ESTIMATED BY MANY POLITICIANS NECESSARY TO CONDUCT A MEANINGFUL CAMPAIGN.)

2. DAN SAID GVN HAD BEEN EXERTING PRESSURE ON INDIVIDUAL DEPUTIES TO GET THE KIND OF PROVISIONS IN THE ELECTORAL LAW THAT IT WANTED. THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE ASSEMBLY WAS TENSE, DEBATES IN COMMITTEE HAD BEEN HEATED TO THE POINT WHERE CERTAIN PRO-GVN DEPUTIES WERE EVEN THREATENING DEPUTIES OPPOSED TO THEM WITH PHYSICAL

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HARM. MOREOVER, MANY OF THE YOUNGER DEPUTIES WHO HAD SHOWN SUCH SPIRIT DURING DEBATES ON THE CONSTITUTION HAVE NOW BECOME MUCH MORE RESERVED. ACCORDING TO DAN, THEY FEAR GVN RECRIMINATIONS. A NUMBER OF THEM NOW AVOID ASSOCIATING PUBLICLY WITH DAN. DAN SAID HE HAD TRIED TO GET SEVERAL YOUNGER DEPUTIES TO PRESENT THEMSELVES AS CANDIDATES FOR POSITION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE ELECTORAL LAW DRAFTING COMMITTEE BUT NONE HAD ACCEPTED.

3. ASKED HOW THE DIRECTORATE WAS COMMUNICATING ITS VIEWS TO THE ASSEMBLY, DAN SAID THAT THE SYSTEM ESTABLISHED DURING DEBATE ON THE CONSTITUTION HAD BROKEN DOWN. THERE WERE NO LONGER MEETINGS BETWEEN DIRECTORATE MEMBERS AND THE ASSEMBLY EDWJISK* BUREAU. RATHER, THE DIRECTORATE CHOSE TO WORK THROUGH THE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE BLOC LED BY DEPUTY LE PHUOC SANG. DAN SAID THIS CONTRIDUTED TO DETERIORATION OF THE GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAD EXISTED BETWEEN ASSEMBLY AND GVN.

4. DAN COMMENTED THAT IN ADDITION TO THE TENSE AND UNHEALTHY ATMOSPHERE WITHIN CONSTITUTENT ASSEMBLY, GVN HAD ALREADY BEGUN A CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT CIVILIAN CANDIDATES AND DISCOURAGE PEOPLE FROM SUPPORTING THEM. HE CITED PRESS ACCOUNTS OF DAN'S "COWARDICE" IN REFUSING TO DRIVE FROM HUE TO QUANG TRI WHEN CA DELEGATION VISITED I CORPS APRIL 13. REAL REASON DAN AND MANY OTHER DEPUTIES REFUSED IS THAT THERE WERE TOTALLY INADEQUATE SECURITY PROVISIONS FOR THE TRIP. BESIDES, ORIGINAL PROMOTER OF TRIP, LE PHUOC SANG, DIDN'T EVEN GO, WHICH SUGGESTS TO DAN THAT WHOLE THING WAS "SOME SORT OF TRICK."

5. DAN SAID THAT THE MILITARY ARE NOT TAKING FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS IN SPIRIT THEY WERE INTENDED, THAT THEY DO NOT REALIZE THAT HE AND OTHER OPPOSITION CANDIDATES ARE MERELY OPPONENTS AND NOT MORTAL ENEMIES AND THAT THEY SEEM TO BE DETERMINED TO WIN AT ALL COSTS WHICH, OF COURSE, WOULD BE DAMAGING BLOW TO GVN PRESTIGE BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY.

6. DAN ENDED CONVERSATION ON CHARACTERISTICALLY OPTIMISTIC NOTE, SAYING, "PEOPLE DIDN'T THINK THERE WOULD BE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS AND WE HAD THEM; NO ONE THOUGHT THE ASSEMBLY WOULD BE AN INDEPENDENT BODY BUT IT WAS; AND MANY PEOPLE DOUBTED THAT THE CONSTITUTION WOULDBE PROMULGATED. SO MAYBE WE WILL HAVE A FAIR AND FREE ELECTION, BUT IT'S GOING TO BE DIFFICULT."

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7. DAN'S STATEMENT THAT DEPUTIES FEEL INTIMIDATED BY GVN IS NOT THE ONLY SUCH REPORT WE HAVE HEARD. TOLD APRIL 25 TH THAT HE FELT THREATENED BY THE GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT ONE NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER HAD BEEN TOLD NOT TO PUBLISH ANY MORE ARTICLES BY HE ALSO CLAIMED THAT INFORMATION MINISTER TRI HAS PUT OUT THE WORD THAT WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE SECGEN OF JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION FOR WHICH HE IS CANDIDATE. WENT SO FAR AS TO ASK OUR HELP IN ARANGING FOR HIM TO MAKE A BRIEF TRIP ABROAD AFTER THE ELECTORAL LAW IS PROMULAGATED. ONE DAY BEFORE, SOUTHERN RENAISSANCE DEPUTY TOLD US THAT PRO-GVN DEPUTY, HAD BEEN OFFERING TO FIGHT DEPUTIES IN ELECTORAL DRAFTING COMMITTEE WHO DISAGREED WITH HIS POINT OF VIEW. b-1 ed

8. COMMENT: AS THE ELECTIONS DRAW CLOSER AND IMPORTANT ISSUES BEARING ON THE ELECTION COME TO THE POINT OF DECISION, TENSIONS ARE INEVITABLY INCREASING. DAN'S REMARKS AND THOSE OF SOME OTHER DEPUTIES REFLECT THE TENSION. HOWEVER WE DO NOT HAVE EVIDENCE THAT GOVERNMENT IS IN FACT USING IMPROPER MEANS TO INFLUENCE DEPUTIES OR THAT IT HAS LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT THE CIVILIAN CANDIDATES. DAN KNOWS THAT WE ARE VERY SENSITIVE TO SUCH ACTIONS, AND HE IS PROBABLY TAKING OUT A LITTLE INSURANCE AS WELL AS EXPRESSING SOME HONEST FEARS. HIS EXPRESSION OF OPTIMISM AT THE END OF THE CONVERSATION SUGGESTS THAT HE IS NOT REALLY AS WORRIED AS HE AT FIRST INDICATED.

(B) WE HAVE SOUGHT TO IMPRESS THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CANDIDATES WITH THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLDING A COMPLETELY HONEST ELECTION. WE WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE THIS LINE WHILE WATCHING CLOSELY FOR ANY CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF IMPROPER ACTIVITY FROM ANY QUARTER.

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NOTE: * AS REC'D.

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